

BOOK REVIEWS

The World Was My Garden*

G. T. HASTINGS

This autobiography is also a history of the introduction of useful foreign plants into the United States and of the development of the Section of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction, later the Division of Plant Exploration and Introduction, of the Department of Agriculture. A brief account of the author's boyhood in Michigan and Kansas, his college days, work as a plant pathologist in Washington and graduate study in Naples and Germany, leads up to his first trip to Java as a protege of Barbour Lathrop. Once in contact with the tropics and a multitude of new economic plants the Plant Explorer developed. The remainder and, much the greater part of the volume—one every lover of plants will read with delight—carries us around the world, east, west, north, south—seeing both strange and familiar plants and meeting plant growers in all lands. Many plants now familiar to everyone were strangers to this country when David Fairchild began his work of sending or bringing new plants home. Dates, avocados, mangos, papayas, new citrus fruits, flowering cherries, vegetables of many kinds, new wheats and barleys, fodder plants; plants for semitropical Florida and California, hardy plants for northern states; merely to list all the plants he was instrumental in introducing or improving would take more space than can be given to this review. He has enriched our agriculture and horticulture as few others have done. Dr. T. D. A. Cockerell in reviewing this book in Science states "his contributions to horticulture and thus to human welfare have been so great that he deserves to rank with those who have done most for the country and the world." The development of gardens in Florida, Georgia, California, North Dakota, Panama and near Washington, D. C. where new plants could be tested and from which they could be distributed is described. He says little of himself, much of those who helped in his work, but reading between the lines it is easy to see that the courteous friendly treatment he

* *The World Was My Garden.* David Fairchild. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1938. 494 pages, 130 plates. \$3.75.

received from officials and growers in all parts of the world was due in no small measure to his enthusiasm and charm. But there are other interests that claim some attention: the first airplane flights of Glenn Curtiss and the Wrights that Fairchild witnessed with his father-in-law, Alexander Graham Bell; experiences in making enlarged photographs of insects (*Monsters of our Back Yard*) with a camera twenty five feet long; the development of the *Journal of Heredity*. Over 200 photographs, mostly of plants and their cultivation taken in many parts of the world by the author, add interest and beauty to the book.

Diatomaceae of Porto Rico*

JOSEPH F. BURKE

This report, issued as a part of the Scientific Survey of Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands, is an important contribution to the literature on North American diatoms. The work of the author was greatly facilitated by the personal possession of a nearly complete library on the diatoms and by the ownership of a collection of about 17,000 diatom slides. Thus equipped as few students have the good fortune to be, and with a broad experience in the critical use of the microscope, it was particularly fortunate that the late Dr. Nathaniel L. Britton invited him to undertake this part of the Survey.

In the Introduction he writes that nearly three hundred collections were made during the years 1926, 1928, and 1929. The cleaning and subsequent treatment of these collections were handled personally by Mr. Hagelstein with equipment used for that purpose only, a detail very important in the regional study of diatoms to avoid contaminations; it shows the thoroughness with which the research was carried on.

A summary is given of previous work, by others, in the area covered by the Survey. The richness of the flora is commented on, with attention called to the interesting flora of the thermal springs near Coamo and Ponce. Species usually considered marine or brackish-water forms were found in apparently fresh water. This feature is discussed. A number of plankton gather-

* The Diatomaceae of Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Robert Hagelstein. Scientific Survey of Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands, Volume VIII, Part 3. New York Academy of Sciences. 1939. 138 pp., 7 pl. \$2.00.